



Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

## Testimony Regarding

### SB 460, An Act Concerning Compassionate Release or Medical Parole and Credits Awarded for Release During an Emergency Declaration

Judiciary Committee  
March 25, 2022

#### Member Organizations

**The Umbrella Center for  
Domestic Violence Services**  
Ansonia, CT

**The Center for Family Justice**  
Bridgeport, CT

**The Center for Empowerment  
and Education**  
Danbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program  
United Services**  
Dayville, CT

**Network Against Domestic  
Abuse**  
Enfield, CT

**Domestic Abuse Services  
Greenwich YWCA**  
Greenwich, CT

**Interval House**  
Hartford, CT

**Chrysalis Domestic Violence  
Services**  
Meriden, CT

**New Horizons**  
Middletown, CT

**Prudence Crandall Center**  
New Britain, CT

**The Umbrella Center for  
Domestic Violence Services**  
New Haven, CT

**Safe Futures**  
New London, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Norwalk, CT

**Women's Support Services**  
Sharon, CT

**Domestic Violence Crisis Center**  
Stamford, CT

**Susan B. Anthony Project**  
Torrington, CT

**Safe Haven**  
Waterbury, CT

**Domestic Violence Program  
United Services**  
Willimantic, CT

Good afternoon Senators Winfield, Flexer and Kissel, Representatives Stafstrom, Blumenthal and Fishbein, and members of the committee. CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) is the state's leading voice for victims of domestic violence and those who serve them. Our members provide essential services to nearly 40,000 victims of domestic violence each year. Services provided include 24-hour crisis response, emergency shelter, housing advocacy and resources, safety planning, counseling, support groups and court advocacy.

This measure creates a new process with a much lower standard for granting compassionate release during times of emergency declarations either nationally or in Connecticut. It also establishes "public health emergency release credits" that will reduce some inmates sentences by hundred twenty-two days per month for each month such inmate is imprisoned during the period covered by an emergency declaration.

Connecticut's existing compassionate release law sets a fairly high bar by requiring the individual to be "so physically or mentally debilitated, incapacitated or infirm as a result of advanced age or as a result of a condition, disease or syndrome" they would be incapable or presenting danger. This proposal states that during emergency declarations, the Board of Pardons and Paroles ("Board") simply needs to find that "circumstances exist which pose a higher risk of harm to such inmate should he or she remain confined." Under this proposal, during emergency declarations, there will be no consideration given to the risk that an eligible offender may pose to society. We all now understand that during a global pandemic there is greater risk for anyone who has to be in close quarters with other people, however, the fact that an individual faces greater risk for being infected by a virus should they remain confined in no way makes them less of a risk to society, which should, at the very least, be a factor of consideration if not the primary factor of consideration. Pandemic-related compassionate release should be limited to immune-compromised or medically vulnerable inmates who are also found to pose a reduced risk to society.

The existing compassionate release process does not require victim notification or input, but it also has a much higher standard and much narrower set of circumstances in which it can be used. Should this measure move forward, the process should require both victim notification and victim input. Under this proposal, we are no longer talking about only granting release to elderly or extremely ill inmates. This could pose unimaginable danger to victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence is an intensely personal crime and the offender may continue to pose a risk to the victim long into their term of imprisonment.

With respect to "public health emergency release credits," should this proposal move forward, we ask that the Committee please ensure a mechanism for victim notification through SAVIN to ensure that victims know that an inmate has become eligible for these credits and therefore may be released sooner.

Thank you for your consideration.

Liza Andrews  
Director of Public Policy & Communications  
CCADV  
[landrews@ctcadv.org](mailto:landrews@ctcadv.org)

655 Winding Brook Drive | Suite 4050 | Glastonbury, CT 06033  
860.282.7899 | 860.282.7892 Fax | [www.ctcadv.org](http://www.ctcadv.org)